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*The Angel's Seal set upon God's faithful Servants,  
when hurtful Winds are blowing in the Church  
militant;*

Being the SUBSTANCE of THREE

# S E R M O N S

Preached in the New Church of BRISTOW, at  
EDINBURGH,

At, and after the celebration of the Sacrament of  
*THE LORD'S SUPPER THERE,*

October 10th, 11th, and 17th, 1742.

Upon REVEL. vii. 1, 2, 3.

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By EBENEZER ERSKINE, M. A.  
Minister of the Gospel at STIRLING.

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Published at the desire of a great many Hearers.

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EDINBURGH:

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The words of God are true and faithful  
 and the words of men are lying and false  
 constant.

Being the substance of THREE

# S E R M O N S

Preached in the New Church of Bury, in  
 EDINBURGH.

At and after the celebration of the sacrament of

THE LORD'S SUPPER THERE.

October 17th, 1743.

U. S. 1, 2, 3.



BY JOHN WILKIE, M. A.

Minister of the Gospel in Bury.

Published at the desire of a great many Hearers.

EDINBURGH.

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The Angel's Seal, set upon God's faithful Servants, when hurtful Winds are blowing in the Church militant.

REV. vii. 1, 2, 3.

And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor the sea, nor on any tree.

Ver. 2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Ver. 3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

**I**T is agreed amongst the generality of interpreters whom I have consulted, that in those three verses I have now read, there is a prediction of some awful spiritual judgments to fall on the visible church, together with the care that the Lord takes of his own faithful remnant, by separating them from others, that they might not be hurt thereby.

These spiritual plagues are expressed under the notion of four winds, verse 1. which drive away unstable professors, who are not rooted by faith in Christ, just as the wind drives loose and light things before it. Those winds are said to be four, with allusion to the four quarters of heaven, east, west, north, and south; implying, that the devil sets upon the church of Christ from all airts at once, so that

he is like a city besieged by enemies from all quarters. The instruments in the hand of God, for plaguing the visible church with those spiritual judgments, are *four*. Some say they were four evil angels, like those that were sent to be a lying spirit in the mouth of Achab's prophets, to persuade him to go up to Ramoth Gilead, to his destruction. Others think that they were good angels, because they restrained the winds until the saints were sealed. But we need not insist to determine the difference, seeing we find God the great Lord and Sovereign, sometimes making use of good, and sometimes of bad angels, as the executioners of his wrath.

But now, in the 2d and 3d verses follows the consolation of the saints of God, his little remnant who are keeping their garments clean, and keeping the word of his patience. The eyes of the Lord are running to and fro through the whole earth, to shew himself strong on their behalf, and his care about them is thus expressed, *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* Where, for explication, we may notice these following particulars.

1<sup>st</sup>. The great agent that interposes for the safety of the saints, when the four noxious winds are blowing away the generality of professors; and that is (another angel,) not any created angel like the four mentioned in the first verse, but the glorious angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, who was sent before Israel to open the way into the land of Canaan, concerning whom God says to Israel *Exod. xxiii. 21. Beware of him obey his voice for my name is in him.* This I say is the angel here spoken of, for he is the head that looks to welfare of his members, *And he*



is given to be head over all things unto the church, which is his body, and all the saints are in his hands, and none shall pluck them out of his or his Father's hand.

2dly, We may notice from what airth this angel doth arise and appear. (He ascends from the east) with allusion to the natural sun in the firmament, who arises from that airth, and spreads his light and influences toward the west. The coming of Christ is compared to lightening coming from the east. He is the light of the world, the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Some observe, that the entry of the temple by which the Prince was to ascend was upon the east, and so it may signify, that when Christ comes for the help and relief of his church, he appears in a princely and sovereign way, and when he doth so, he acts like himself the Prince of the kings of the earth.

3dly, This angel is the Lord-keeper of the privy seal of heaven, for (he had the seal of the living God.) This shews that he is his Father's great trustee, who has all power in heaven and in earth committed unto him. On the same account the keys of the house of David, or the government, is laid upon his shoulders. *Isai. 22.* at the close, "He shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, the offspring, and the issue, the vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flaggons." The care of God's particular kingdom, of his chosen generation, royal priesthood, peculiar people, and holy nation is committed to him.

4thly, We may observe how Christ executes his authoritative trust, (He cries with a loud voice unto the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea.) His crying may signify Christ's authority, the imminency of the danger, and his care to have the hurtful winds restrained for a season. Those to whom he directs his cry are the four angels

to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, whereby we are made to understand that all the angels, both good and bad, are subject to the command and authority of him, who is the Head of all principalities, and power, might and dominion, &c. None of them all can act but by orders from him. Christ in heaven is looking to the welfare of his church and people upon earth in time of danger, when they themselves have no thought about their own hazard.

5thly, We have the particular charge given to the angels by Christ, which I have mainly in view, ver. 3. He said to them, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

Where we have, 1<sup>st</sup>, A prohibition. 2<sup>d</sup>, The reason thereof

1<sup>st</sup>, The prohibition (Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees for a time.) Where you see the judgment is not absolutely averted or discharged, but only suspended until provision be made for the safety of God's peculiar people. Observe, That any favour shewed unto the wicked, or any suspension of divine vengeance with respect to them, is owing unto the truly godly that live among them, if it were not for the elect's sake, God would make short work with the rest of mankind. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we had been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah.

2<sup>d</sup>, We have the party immediately concerned in the prohibition, (the earth, the sea, and the trees,) by whom in general we are to understand professors of different kind, against whom the banish of those hurtful winds was levelled, and who were to sustain great hurt and injury thereby to their souls, when God's time of loosing them should come. What sort of professors of religion are particularly pointed at by the earth, the sea, and trees, shall be declared afterwards.

3<sup>d</sup>, We have the reason of the restraint that is laid

upon the hurtful winds, that they are not suffered to blow for a while. *viz.* (Until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.) Where we have,

1<sup>st</sup>, The objects of the divine care, *the servants of our God*. It is Christ that is speaking, and he speaks in the capacity of a public head, in his own name, and in the name of all his faithful friends and followers; saying, *Our God*, because he is the head of the whole mystical body, and stands in a joint relation to God, with his members and people, according to John xx. 17. "I ascend to my God, and your God, to my Father, and your Father." The character that he gives them is, that they are the *servants of God*, and the reason of this designation is, because they were such as *feared his name*. Neh. i. 7. and because they kept the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus, when the flood cast out of the mouth of the old serpent was sweeping away the bulk of visible professors unto a course of apostacy.

2<sup>dly</sup>, We may notice what was to be done to, or for the servants of God; why, they are *to be sealed*, i. e. they are to be separate or distinguished from others, that were to be doom'd to destruction; much like that, Ezek. ix. 4, 11. Says the Lord (to the man who had the writers inkhorn by his side,) "Go through the city, and set a mark upon the men that sigh and mourn," &c. And then 'tis added, "Come not near to any on whom is the mark." In short, this discovers care that God has of his own remnant, and the special providence that God exercises about them, when his judgments are in the earth.

3<sup>dly</sup>, Notice the visibility of this seal; they are sealed on their foreheads. Thus Rev. xiv. 1. the *hundred forty and four thousand* who stand with the Lamb on Mount Sion, they are said to have his Father's name in their foreheads, i. e. they had a visible profession of the name of God in the world, and were



not ashamed to confess him before men : So here this seal is set on the foreheads of the servants of God, *i. e.* as they had been faithful to his cause and interest, when others had deserted him and his truth, so he would visibly own them as his before the world, and would not be ashamed of them, and would make his regard of them evident to all men, by the singular care he took of them when his destroying judgments were in the earth.

*4thly*, The reason of their being thus sealed, is here implied, *v. z.* that they might not be hurt, *i. e.* that they might be preserved from the danger and hazard of these pestilential winds that were to blow in a little upon the visible church. Thus I have endeavoured to open the text and context a little.

From the 2d and 3d verses we may observe these few things.

Observe 1st, That Christ, the glorious increased Angel of the covenant, is the protector and guardian of his church and people. He is that other angel who has a watchful eye upon his remnant, that they may not suffer hurt by the winds that were to blow, Psalm 91. "The Angel of the Lord encompasseth me round about them that fear him." *Isai. 63. 9.* "The angel of his presence saved them, in his love and pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." In which the Prophet refers to *Exod. 23. 20.* where God says to Moses, "Behold, I send mine angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee unto the place which I have prepared; beware of him, obey his voice, for my name is in him." This is he that was with the church in the wilderness, and this is he that was with the New Testament church, even "he who rides in the heavens by his great name Jah, for the help of his people, and in his excellency on the skies," and therefore will make all things, even the most cloudy dispensations work



together for good to them that love God, and who are the called according to his purpose.

Observ. 2. That Christ's appearances for his church makes day to break from under the darkest night. Hence here likened unto the sun ascending from the east, dispelling the darkness of the night. Luke 1. 78. "Through the tender merits of our God the day "spring from on high hath visited us." He brings healing in his wings.

Observ. 3d. That however the Glory of Christ may be clouded and obscured by the errors of man, and the mists of hell, yet, like the sun in the firmament, he is always in the ascendant. This prophesy here is thought, has a particular respect unto that period of the church, where, after the ten Romish heathen persecutions, a swarm of heresies brake out in the church, calculate for obscuring the glory of his person and righteousness, and yet at the same time he is ascending, and in the issue all these mists serve only as a foil to set forth his glory with the greater lustre. Thus the wrath of men and devils, and all their errors and delusions, shall praise him; and what will not answer this end he will restrain; and therefore let the children of Zion be always joyful in their King, he will prevail.

Observ. 4th. That our glorious Redeemer is a person of the highest interest, credit, and authority in heaven. For here we are told, that (he hath the seal of the living God.) God has hung upon him all the glory of his house, he hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Oh! what unspeakable consolation is here, especially considering that he got this authority, and executes it for the good of his church.

Observ. 5th. That such is the power and authority of our Redeemer, that all the execrations of the divine anger against the children of men, or the rots

ten professors of the visible church, are under his empire and command: For here we see he restrains the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, and the trees: Angels, and principalities and powers, in heavenly places, do obeysance unto him, and are his winged messengers, and as a flame of fire to obey him; and as for wicked men and devils, they are under the chains of his power and providence; he rules in the raging of the sea, and when the waves thereof roar, he stilleth them, and says, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.*

Observ. 6th. That when the danger is great and most imminent towards his church and people, that is the season wherein he most readily interposes for help and deliverance: When the four angels were just ready to set loose the four hurtful winds, whereby good and bad chaff and corn might have been swept away together, then he gives the cry to stop until the servants of God were sealed, and provision made for their safety. Now will I arise, saith the Lord, *viz.* when their strength is gone, and none shut up or left.

Observ. 7th. That in the times of the greatest defection and apostacy in the visible church, God has still a remnant that are cleaving to him and his way and cause. This is clearly implied here, he has servants that must be sealed when the winds of error and corruption are hurling away the rest of visible professors, Rev. 3. 4. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments, &c.* When all Israel was carried away with a flood of idolatry, God had his seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee unto Baal: God will keep his hand about those, come of the rest of the world what will.

Observ. 8th. God's remnant in this world they are mingled with the rest of mankind, they live promiscuously together in the same land, in the same

parish, and in the same families. So much is imported in the staying of the winds until the servants of God were sealed, they are just like the wheat and chaff lying in the same barn-floor; or like the tares and corn which grow in the same field, and yet are of a quite different nature, and therefore cannot but be a great grievance to one another; the godly are a burden to the wicked, and the wicked are a burden to the godly. Hence is that melancholy sonnet of David's, "Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar."

Observ 9th. That although godly and wicked be as it were jumbled together, yet the Lord knoweth them that are his, and his eyes are running to and fro to shew himself strong on their behalf. Hence you see here the angel who is their guardian, Jesus Christ, he cries to stop the winds till they are sealed, which implies that he knows them that were to be sealed, and was exercising a particular providence about them. He that calls forth the stars by name, he knows all his jewels by name and surname, and no wonder, for he bears their name on his breast; their names are written in the Lamb's book, that none of them be lost.

Observ 10th. That when once provision is made for the safety and welfare of God's faithful servants and people, he then gives a loose unto his awful and terrible judgments against a wicked world, the generation of his wrath. You see here that the restraint is only until the servants of God be sealed, which implies, that whenever they were sealed, the restraint was taken off, and the angel loosed the four hurtful winds against the rest of mankind. So soon as Noah and his family were shut up in the ark, the fountains of the great deep and the windows of heaven opened, a loose is given unto the waters of the deluge upon the earth, and by and by, fire and brimstone, are rained down from heaven upon the old world. So soon as Lot is gone out of Sodom,



heaven upon the rest of the wicked inhabitants. Whence we see, that the truly godly, though they be the objects of the world's hatred, yet they are the pillars of the land where they live, to keep off the judgments of God from them. *Isai. 1.* "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrhah."

*Observ. 11th.* That God's particular interest in his people is their safety and security in an evil day. They are the servants of our God, and therefore they must be sealed.

*Observ. 12th.* That Christ and believers they have one common God and Father, and therefore here he takes them in with himself when he speaks of them, *Our God*: Hence is that New Testament name, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He and they are included in one covenant, wrapt up in the same robe. But passing all these, the doctrine I intend to insist upon is that which follows:

*Observ.* That whatever pernicious or hurtful winds may be allowed to blow in the militant church, Christ, her glorious head and guardian, will take a distinguishing care for the safety of those that are found faithful to him in an evil day, that they do not sustain any real hurt thereby.

The foundation of the doctrine is clear and obvious; for here, when the four winds are just ready to blow, Christ the great Angel, that has the seal of the living God, ascends from the east, arises as it were out of obscurity, and gives the cry, saying, "Hurt not the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." See for proof, *Ezek. 9. 4.* "Go through the city, and set a mark on the foreheads of that sigh and cry," &c.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall, through divine assistance, endeavour the order and method following:



I. I shall take notice of a few of these hurtful winds that are suffered to blow in the church militant, and who they are that are hurt by them.

II. I would enquire who are these servants of God for whose sake the hurtful winds are restrained for a time.

III. I would speak a little of the seal he sets upon them for their security against hurtful winds.

IV. Why doth he set a seal upon them.

V. Apply the whole in some uses.

The first thing is to take notice of some of those pernicious winds wherewith the church of Christ is infested, while here in a militant state.

*First*, then, there is the wind of open violence, persecution, and blood-shed. The roaring lion he delights in blood, especially the blood of the saints, who are the seed of the woman, and therefore commonly this is the first thing that he essays in order to ruin the church of Christ. Hence he instigated Cain to slay his brother Abel; he instigated the Jews to crucify the Lord of Glory, and to persecute his apostles; and the Romans, by ten several persecutions, to raze the Christian church, if possible, from the face of the earth. And 'tis well known how he did instigate malignant men in power, under some reigns before the late revolution, to essay by persecution and blood-shed to raze a covenanted reformation and all that owned it, from off the face of the earth. And we see the same spirit of enmity at this day raging at that same work and cause under another denomination, only the great angel of the covenant does not allow as yet that wind to blow; but how soon the permission is given, I make no doubt but we may see the Grass-market, and other places through Scotland, reeking as fast as ever with the blood of the saints.

*Secondly*, Sometimes, and very frequently, the hurtful wind of error in doctrine is suffered to blow, in

the barn or field of the visible church. There must be heresies, says the apostle, that they that are approved may be made manifest. 1 Cor. 1. 19. Those heresies are compared to the wind; hence that, Eph. 4. 14. Be not like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. It galls and torments the devil to see the church of christ possessing the pure truths of God. He himself abode not in the truth, and therefore cannot endure to see any abiding in it; and therefore studies by all means to sow the tares of error and corruption in doctrine, whereby the food of the church may be poisoned, and people perverted from the simplicity of the gospel. And, indeed, when once it has entered, it flies like a pestilential wind corrupting the minds of men. Manifold melancholy instances might be adduced, both in former ages and in our own day, but I must not enlarge, that I may won forward to the application. I shall only add, that truth in its purity is such a valuable commodity, that every man is to contend for it as in an agony, for if but the least hoof of it be parted with, we are in danger of losing the whole, because of the necessary connection of truths, in the system of our holy religion.

*Thirdly*, Another hurtful wind is the wind of strong delusions, as to everlasting soul concerns, and this is consequential unto the former. It is very common and ordinary, when God has given his statutes and testimony unto a people in purity, as a light unto their feet, and a lamp unto their paths. And instead of taking heed unto the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light shining in a dark place, they embrace, countenance, and patronize error; God, in that case, closes their own delusions, suffers them to feed upon ashes, a deceived heart to turn them aside that they cannot deliver their soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Isa. 44. 20. Thus he dealt with Israel, Psalm 81. 11. My people would not hearken

to my voice, Israel would have none of me, therefore I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own councils. Thus he dealt with the abettors and supporters of antichristian errors, 2 Thel. 2. 11, 12. They received not the truth in the love of it, therefore God gave them up unto strong delusions to believe lies. And this is the very case with multitudes both of ministers and people in our own day. They have forsaken the reformation doctrine, principles, and covenants, in many instances, which are made known to the world. They have rejected a testimony for that glorious work, and killed the witnesses, and cast them out, for which cause God is giving many of them up in this generation to such strong delusion as to believe a lie, and to cry up that for a saving work of God, which looks like that judgment we read of, Isa. 6. 9, 10, 11, 12. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear you indeed, but understand not, and see you indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed.

*Fourthly,* There is the wind of temptation that blows in the visible church. This was a wind that blew hard on the glorious head and captain of our salvation, as you see Matth. 4. He was tempted to a distrust of providence, to self murder, and to call in question his own supreme deity. And, therefore, none of his friends and followers need be surprized when they meet with the like attacks; and never is the enemy more ready to make an attack upon the Christian, than when he has been admitted unto fellowship with, and nearness to the Lord, as you see in the case of Peter, after he had been at the first supper, where Christ himself was personally present, Luke 22. 31, 32. Simon, Simon, Satan hath sought



to have you that he may sift you as wheat, &c. And therefore, you that have been at a communion table, and enjoyed any thing of the Lord, take heed to yourselves, for you may expect a winnowing wind from hell to blow e'er it be long. Oh! look by the eye of faith to your Advocate with the Father, that he may pray that your faith fail not.

*Fifthly*, Another hurtful wind is the wind of prophanity, and open ungodliness. Usually when men espouse errors, and lax toleration principles, God gives up with them, lays the reins upon their necks, and suffers them to run into all excess of riot saying, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die: Let us make the best of the world and the pleasures of it that we can. Thus God dealt with the very heathen, when they did not walk up to the light and law of nature, Rom. i. 25, 26, 28, 29. Now if God thus punished the abuse of nature's light, how much more will he not punish the abuse of gospel light, by giving a people unto all manner of impiety, which is the case with multitudes among us at this day, who are given up to the same abominations with heathens.

*Sixthly*, All these winds are commonly followed with the winds of sweeping and desolating judgments, such as sword, famine, and pestilence, whereby the wicked are turned off the stage of time into a miserable eternity. Many awful beacons of God's severity and justice this way, are left upon record to us in the scriptures of truth, such as the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Jewish church and nation: And truly I am afraid yea, I may be pretty positive, that God is saying to us in this land upon the account of perjury, covenant-breaking, apostacy, contempt of the truth, persecution, and church tyranny, prophanity, and the like, How shall I pardon you for these? shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?



The rumour of war is begun, but where it shall end God knows; perhaps God is saying as in Isa. 6. When the prophet puts the question, When, or how long shall these spiritual judgments last? the Lord answers, ver. 11, 12. Until the city be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without men, and the land be utterly desolate.

Thus I have told you of some of those hurtful winds that God lets blow in the visible church. But now you may ask me, What are we to understand by the earth, the sea, and the trees that shall be hurt by these winds, particularly the winds of error, defec- tion, and delusion, &c. I shall just give you the opinion of the judicious Durham upon the place. *First*, then, by the earth, we are to understand earthly minded professors, who suppose gain to be godli- ness: they have some shadow of a profession, and some form of godliness. but yet the world is set in their hearts, their god is their belly, the mind earth- ly things, such as wealth, ease, credit, preferment, and the like. Such professors are swept away like chaff when the above winds are let blow, Phil. 3. 19. 2. Pet. 2. 15. Jude 10. Hence also 1 Tim. 6. 10. The love of money is called the root of all evil which, while some have sought after, they have erred from the faith. I am afraid earthly considerations, and worldly gain, keeps many men back from owning the truth and testimony of the day; it would not stand with their employments, Acts 19. 25.

*2dly*, by the sea, the same commentator understands light unstable professors, who are fixed in nothing, but, like Reuben, their motto is, Unstable as water thou shalt not excel. The apostle Jude calls them, ver. 13. raging waves of the sea, wandering stars, and clouds that are carried with a tempest, like some among ourselves, that are keen presbyterians one day, the next day independents, and the next day joining hands with prelacy; one day keen for supporting

a testimony for the covenants and reformation; and the next day for burying it. Such unstable professors they are like the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

3dly, By the trees he understands professors who, for their gifts of knowledge, learning, utterance, and the like, are high above others, both in their own conceit, and the opinion of other men, but not being rooted in Christ by faith of God's operation, when the wind blows they are like the lofty trees plucked up by the root, and overthrown by the winds of error, delusion, or persecution. And don't we see this also fulfilled in our own day? Men that seemed once in a day to be pillars in the church, and like tall cedars in Lebanon, overthrown with the present winds of error, and delusion.

II. The second thing was to enquire, who are those servants of God for whose sake the hurtful winds are restrained, that provision may be made for their safety when they do actually blow. I shall not stand much upon this, but only refer you unto a description given of them in two particulars in this same book of the Rev. 12. 17. where the apostle, by the spirit, is describing these against whom the dragon makes war, and casts out the flood of malice and enmity: They are the seed of the woman that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.

1st, The servants of God are such as keep the commandments of God, *i. e.* 1st, They are holy persons; they sanctified and preserved in Christ Jesus, they have the law of God in their hearts, and therefore have a respect unto all the commandments, Psal. 119. 6. Although they cannot in this life attain to perfection in holiness, yet it is what they aim at, and therefore forget things behind, and reach forth unto perfection like these that shall attain to the resurrection of the just. Holiness is the badge and distinguishing motto of all the true followers of the Lamb,

therefore called a holy nation, and the people of his holiness. Holiness becometh thy house, O God, for ever. Or 2dly, as Durham observes, they keep the commandments of God; it is to be understood of a keeping the laws, ordinances, and institutions of Christ, in opposition to a set of men in the antichristian church, who, through their traditions, were making void the commandments of God. Observe, That it is the character of Christ's faithful servants, whether ministers or Christians, to observe and do all things whatever he has commanded them in his word. It is not what kings, parliaments, or assemblies command, but what God commands is the rule by which they walk, the laws of man must be tried by the law of God. There is a generation of men in our day called ministers, who, instead of keeping the commandments of God, are very careful to keep the commandments of men, though even cross to the command of God: If they be commanded by men to prophane the Sabbath, to prophane the pulpit, and ministerial character, and to prostitute the headship of Christ, and turn heralds to another head than Christ; they'll do it, and defend the deed when they have done. Such servants of men cannot be the servants of Christ Jesus, but they serve their own bellies. And yet such men at this day, though we hear nothing of their repenting of their evil deeds, and though they be holding fast deceit, and refusing to return, some would have us to believe, are honoured of God as great instruments of the conversion of souls. I shall only say, that I cannot help thinking, that as such ministers do only carry a counterfeit commission, so the seals of their ministry are but counterfeit seals. For my part, I shall never believe these noisy conversions to be of the right stamp, until I see both ministers and converts following the practice of Judah, and Israel, when returning to the Lord after a course of defection, Jer. 50. 4, 5. In those days, and at



time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going, and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten. The reason is set down in the two following verses which are applicable in the present case of the church of God in this land. My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place. All that found them have devoured them, and their adversaries said, we offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, even the Lord, the hope of their fathers. And thereupon they depart out of Babylon, and their ministers or shepherds become as he-goats before the flock.

2dly, The faithful servants of God are said to be such as have the testimony of Jesus. By the testimony of Jesus we are to understand the gospel of Christ, or the doctrine of faith in its purity, which only is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1. 16. The whole word of God is divided into law and gospel, and sometimes the whole word is called by the one, and sometimes by the other, and you see frequently in the 119th Psalm. Now the question is, What is it to have the testimony of Jesus? Ans. 1st, It implies a firm faith of the record of God concerning his son Jesus Christ; this is called a believing the report, and setting to the seal that God is true. 2dly, A firm trust in Christ as the only Saviour upon the testimony of God, they credit and trust him for the execution of all his saving offices, as a prophet, priest, and king, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and compleat redemption. 3dly, A holy care to preserve the doctrine, worship, and the govern-



ment of Christ's house in its purity, and according to the pattern shewed in the Mount, together with a steady contending for the faith, and a standing fast in the liberties wherewith Christ has made his people free in opposition to error in doctrine, corruption in worship, and all tyranny in government and discipline. Now, these are the servants of God that are here intended to be sealed, in order to their being preserved from those hurtful winds that blow in the visible church. These are they against whom the rage of the great red dragon and his angels is leveled, against these the flood cast out of his mouth doth run. But I now proceed to the

III. Third thing proposed in the method, which was to speak a little of the seal that is set upon the servants of God, and here I shall propose and answer two or three questions.

Query 1st, Who is he that seals them? Answer, 'Tis Christ the great Angel that hath the seal of the living God. He himself was sealed as God's great Secretary and Plenipotentiary un'o this lower world, John 6. 27. And he hath the seal o' the living God committed to him, for he hath given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life unto us as he hath given him. John 17. 3. He hath the roll of election committed to him, that he may put his mark, his own name, and his Father's name upon them. Rev. 12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him my new name. There you see that Christ makes the overcomer in the temple of God: but that is not all; he writes his name upon them, and the name of his God, he puts his own image and spirit in and upon them, as he is the express image of the Father. Thus you see that it is Christ that seals the servants of our God.

**Query 2d.** What is implied in the sealing them?  
**Ans.** It implies, 1st, that he is their great owner and proprietor; for a man seals his own goods, that it may be known they are his. The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. They are his by election, and his Father's donation, by purchase, and by covenant, and by the inhabitation of his Spirit; and the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his.

2dly, A seal is for distinction to distinguish one man's goods from another, and so it implies that God will have a difference put betwixt his own people and others, for they are his gold and coin of his own mint, the rest of the world are but the dross; they are his wheat, and others are the chaff; and what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? He has his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor, &c.

3dly, A seal is for confirmation. The king's seal, appended unto a charter, establishes and confirms it; and so it may import, that before the winds were suffered to blow, Christ will have his own servants established and confirmed in the faith of these truths, which were to be most exposed to the winds, that they might not be carried about like children with every wind of doctrine, but might be like Mount Zion, which cannot be removed for ever.

4thly, A seal is sometimes for secrecy. We read of a book, Rev. 5. 1. which was sealed with seven seals, because of the great secrets and hid mysteries contained in it. No man can warrantably break up a sealed letter, but he to whom it is directed, because it is hid and secret to any other; and so it may import, that God's people are his hidden ones, and that his secrets are imparted to them, and not to others.

God's people they are a hidden people: They have consulted against thy hidden ones, says the Psalmist.

God's doves they abide in the clefts of the rock, and in the secret places of the straits. He has them hid in the secret of his presence as in a pavilion; he has his secret chambers in which he hides them until the indignation be overpast, Isa. 26. at the close. And then as they are secret hidden persons, so he in puts his secrets into them, which he hides from the rest of the world. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to others it is not given.

5thly, A seal is a badge of honour, love, and esteem; and so it implies, that his servants are honourable persons, precious in his sight. Isa. 43. 3. Ever since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, &c.

6thly, A seal is for custody and preservation; so the saints and servants of God they are the preserved in Christ Jesus, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Query 3d. When and how are they sealed?

Ans. 1st, From all eternity they were sealed with his electing and everlasting love. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, &c. He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. He predestinates them unto the adoption of children.

2dly, In their conversion and effectual calling, they are sealed in their own persons with the image of the second Adam, being predestinate thereunto from eternity; they are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them; they are seporate from the rest of the world, and become a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, a holy nation, that they should shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

3dly, They have a seal of blood set upon them in their redemption and justification; for as you see,



verse 14th of this chapter, They have their garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

4thly, They have the seal of the Spirit of promise set upon them. Eph. 1. 13. After that ye believed ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance. The Spirit of God dwells in them as in a temple; he sanctifies them by the truth; he, as a spirit of adoption, teaches them to cry, Abba Father, and comforts them in all their tribulations with the consolations of God, with the oil of gladness wherewith he was anointed above his fellows.

Query 4th. But why are they said to be sealed in their foreheads?

Ans. The forehead, you know, is the upper part of the face, the most conspicuous part of a man's countenance; and I conceive the seal upon the forehead it may import two things.

1st, Their visible profession of Christ, and their open owning of the Lord, and his way and cause in the time of the greatest opposition, when error, and delusion, and persecution, was most rampant in the visible church. Sirs, it is not enough to be night disciples, when Christ is calling us to confess him before men. No, we must come forth to the open field, when called forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. He did not hide his face from shame and spitting, but openly endured the cross, and despised the shame; and yet shall we be ashamed of him, or afraid to own him before the world. It is dangerous to come near the borders of denying him and his cause before men, lest he should deny us before his angels. Christ's plough, his cause and testimony, drives heavily for many professors in Scotland at this day, and because they have been so slack hand'd this way, God is leaving some, both ministers and people,



to put hand to another sort of plough, which will produce a melancholy crop e'er all be done.

2dly, Their being marked and sealed in their foreheads implies, That in the time of common calamity, God will make such a visible difference between his own faithful servants and others, that he that runs may read, according to that, Mal. 3. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. The righteous and the wicked live together now (as I was saying,) but e'er it be long God will put such a visible mark of favour upon the one, and of vengeance upon the other, that all men and angels shall know the one from the other, and at the end the separation will be as wide as heaven and hell.

IV. The fourth thing in the method was to enquire into the reasons why Christ, the Angel of the covenant, will have his servants marked in their foreheads, when the winds are to be let blow?

Ans. 1st, In so many words, He will have them sealed, because they are his Father's gift. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and for the Father's sake that gave them he will have them sealed. 2dly, Because he has bought them at a dear rate, even at the price of his precious blood, not with silver, or gold, or such corruptible things, &c. 3dly, Because they are his sheep, his lambs that he carries in his bosom, Isa. 40. 11. 4thly, Because they are his servants, the servants of God, their ear he has boared, they love their master, &c. 5thly, Because they are his peculiar friends; I call you no more servants, but friends John 14. 14, 15. 6thly, Because they are his seed, Isa. 55. 10. Psalm 22, at the close, A seed shall serve him, &c. 7thly, Because they are his spouse and bride, he their husband and bridegroom, Isa. 54. 6. Hos. 2. 16, &c. 8thly, Because they are his members and he their head, they

they are his bone and flesh, they hold the head, &c. 9thly, He seals them because they believe in him, Eph. 1. 12. After that ye believed ye were sealed, &c. 10thly, He seals them because they love him, so as to mourn for injury done him, Ezek. 9. 4. 11thly, He seals them because they are his faithful witnesses that confess him when others deny him. 12thly, He seals them that they may not suffer hurt by the destroying winds that blow in the visible church. They keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus, and therefore he will keep them in the hour of temptation, according to the promise, Psalm 91. 3, 7.

V. The fifth thing was the application of the doctrine.

And the first use I shall make of it shall be by way of lamentation over the many hurtful winds that have blown, and are still blowing in our Lord. God seems, in our day, to have given a commission unto his angels, the Ministers of his wrath, who fulfil his pleasure, to let loose the winds, that the earth, the sea, and the trees, may be hurt thereby; and much hurt and damage have they done already in our valley of vision.

Query. What are the hurtful winds that are blowing, at this day, or in this period of the church; for some tell us, that the church of Christ in this land was never in a better condition? I answer, whatever some may imagine, yet I am of the mind, and many others with me, that the church of Christ was never in a more dangerous condition since our reformation from Popery. God seems to have given a commission to the four angels to loose the four winds, to hurt the inhabitants of the land. And here I'll tell you of several hurtful winds which, like the pestilence, are walking through the land, and hurting many, both professors and others, at this day.

First, The hurtful wind of infidelity or deism is blowing, which strikes at the roots, and denies all supernatural revelation; or, at least, discards all the supernatural mysteries of the Christian religion, which depraved reason is not able to comprehend; such as the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God, and of his satisfaction to justice; of the necessity of regeneration; of justification by his imputed righteousness; of sanctification by his Spirit. These, and the like supernatural doctrines of our holy religion, I say, are exploded by many in our day, in so much that, through many places of Scotland, instead of the gospel of Christ, nothing is to be heard but the dry sapless harrangues of heathenish morality; and what must become of those poor souls that are daily entertained with such food? Why, Solomon answers the question when he tells us, Where no vision is the people perish. The hurtful wind of Arian heresy has been travelling through the land, and appeared at the bar of the assembly, without any becoming censure. The doctrine of self-love also, whereby the creature is exalted above the glorious Creator. We have been long taught, that the chief end of man is to glorify God, and that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we ought to do all to the glory of God. And, to be sure, that which is the chief end of man, ought also to be the leading and chief motive of all his moral and religious actions. But now it is a doctrine sustained by the national assembly, that our own delight, pleasure, and satisfaction in glorifying God, is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions, whereby the creature's happiness is preferred unto the glory of God who made all things for himself: And I cannot shun to observe, That God, in a way of righteous judgment, is answering many according to this idol of jealousy set up in the temple of God, by letting them adopt and embrace a religion that lies all in internal sect.



ings, pleasure, and satisfaction to themselves, while the declarative glory of God, and the honour of the Redeemer's crown and kingdom in the world, is none of their concern; yea, it torments them to hear of a testimony against the indignities done to him in the land wherein we live. I might here also insist on the injuries done to the doctrine of the grace of God, in the Acts of Assembly 1720, and 1722, with relation to "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," whereby a bundle of precious truths are condemned, and lye under the rubbish ever since, which I hope shall yet be brought forth unto victory.

Secondly, The hurtful wind of church tyranny and abused discipline, has been for a long time blowing in the church of Scotland, whereby the erroneous have been screened; and ministers of Christ cast out of ministerial communion, and deposed for bearing testimony to the truth, in opposition unto the present current of apostacy and backsliding. And how has the boar of ecclesiastical tyranny laid waste, and scattered the flock of Christ up and down the land, through violent intrusions that have been made upon Christian congregations, imposing men upon them, contrary to that liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.

Thirdly, I might, among other pernicious winds, take notice of the public affront done to the Mediator's crown as the alone King of Zion, when, by reading of the Act anent Porteous, ministers changed their holding of Christ, and prostituted his sovereignty, and dip't their hands in that innocent blood shed at the execution of Wilson: by not testifying against him as a bloody murderer condemned in law, when they read that Act.

Fourthly, How has the wind of profanity and open impiety blown upon all ranks in the land, and hurt many, both in soul and bodily estate? What heaven daring impiety abounds, insomuch that the land



groans under our provocations against the Holy One of Israel. The very abominations of the heathen are perpetrated among us Christians, like those Rom. 1st, at the close.

Fifthly, There is another wind that God is suffering to blow at this day, whereby both many ministers and people are staggered, and cast down, and that is the noisy wind that the known foreigner of the prelatick communion of the church of England has brought along with him unto this land: I know, indeed, that some deny any connection between him and that work which we have now among us; but it is in vain to deny this, when it visibly follows him through the world, wherever he goes, and is received into communion as a minister of Jesus Christ.

Query. How doth it appear that this is one of the hurtful winds that God has, by the ministry of angels, whether good or bad, loosed upon the church of Scotland? for many call it, and are very confident of it, that it is a heavenly wind.

Ans. I cannot stay upon it at present, only, notwithstanding of all the fine things I have read and heard about it, I cannot help thinking, that it is one of the most hurtful winds that ever blew in this covenanted land, and that for these reasons. It appears to me, and many others, to be a hurtful and pernicious wind, by observing, 1st, Whence it comes. 2dly, Whether it blows. 3dly, What are its effects.

1st, Let us notice whence it comes. It comes from the prelatick superstitious church of England, and he that has brought it owns himself to be still of the communion of that church, abjured by that church in her national covenant, and by the three nations in the solemn league. One who has sworn the oath of supremacy, and so renounced the alone headship of Christ in his church, and in consequence of this, denies the binding obligation of our solemn covenant.

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And his own account of his conversion appears to be an evident delusion of the devil.

2dly, Let us also observe, whether and for what this noisy wind blows. It is evident that it blows up every where through the world, and particularly in this land, for filthy lucre, worldly gain and advantage; the cry of it every where is, Who will shew us any of this world's good? Another airt towards which it blows is, toleration to all sects, plainly founded upon the principle of catholic love and communion, so much applauded by that foreigner, and all that patronize him and his work. And hence the natural tendency of it is to overthrow the hedge of government, and to cast down the walls and fortifications of Zion, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

3dly, Let us notice what are the fruits and effects of this noisy wind. I know, indeed, that some talk of great and good effects of it, in the conviction, conversion, and consolation of many; but I much doubt if this will stand the trial of the word, which is the light by which all spirits and works must be tried. To the law, and to the testimony if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them. An imaginary conviction produceth an imaginary conversion, and an imaginary conversion produceth but an imaginary consolation. I'll only tell you of two or three fruits of it, that I know, and can document. 1st, A stated enmity and bitterness of spirit against a covenanted work of reformation, and all that bear up or own a testimony for it at this day, notwithstanding of their catholic love. 2dly, A striking men blind, and deaf, and dumb, as to all the public affronts done to Christ, or injuries done to his mystical body. I dare appeal to themselves, if, at their most solemn occasions, were they say there was most of the Lord, any thing was spoken for God's declarative glory, in opposition un-

to the bloodshed, perjury, covenant-breaking, or the violent intrusions and rapes committed on the spouse of Christ, or the profaning of Christ's crown, his sabbaths, and the ministerial character, by reading of Porteous's Act. Nay, so far from this, that that spirit goes along with intruders, act readers, and the like, as well as others, but not one word of their professing repentance for their evil deeds. 3dly, Another fruit of this work is the palliating of all the public defections of the church, and so fostering and hardening men in their evil ways. Hence they wipe their mouths, and cry they are innocent, God is with us, and he has forsaken those that pretend to witness against us and our ways: I have heard with my ears, and read little less in some of their writings, Where is the God of the seceders, he is not owning their ministry as he is owning us. I shall only say with David, when this prophane jeer was past upon him in his affliction and distress, Psalm 42. at the close, It is as a sword in our bones, while the enemy says daily to us, Where is your God? But we desire to follow David's example, and say with him in the words following these now quoted, Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. This puts me in mind of a passage I have read in Baxter's Life. A certain faithful minister of Christ, who being ordered to a prison at some distance, under the custody of soldiers; by the way they halted at the house of a malignant lady, who, when she saw the minister in the hands of his enemies, said, Where is the God of the whigs now? Upon which he desired a sight of her bible, which she brought with a taunt; he takes the bible and casts up the following text, which I shall read also to those who upbraid us after the same manner; the text you have Micah 7. 8, 9, 10. Rejoice not against me, O



mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgement for me: he will bring me forth to the light; and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her; now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. As this scripture upon the reading of it, struck the woman with a damp and confusion. so may it do to those whose language is the same with hers. Now these I say are some of the hurtful winds that blow at this day.

Use 2d. Shall be by the way of trial and examination. Seeing it is so that such hurtful winds blowing in the church of Christ, it concerns us to try whether we be among the number of these servants of God who are secured against any real hurt from those pernicious winds, by having the seal of the living God set upon us.

Query, How shall I know if I be amongst the happy number? In answer to this question, I shall offer you the following marks of the faithful Servants of our God, who have this seal set upon them.

1<sup>st</sup>, All God's faithful servants they have their bands loosed, Psal. 116. 16. O Lord, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bands. All are by nature held fast in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity; they are lawful captives; now has the Lord in a day of power loosed your bands, and proclaim liberty to you, and made you free indeed.

2<sup>dly</sup>, All God's servants have seen their master's glory, beauty, and excellency, 2 Cor. iv. 6. God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your hearts, &c. Have you seen the Father in the Son, and has the sight transformed you into his image.

3dly, The first born of the family will be very ~~very~~ dear unto you, more glorious than all the mountains of prey? and that will be the language of your heart, My beloved is white, and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand.

4thly, They are all very sensible of their inability to serve him as they ought, yea, they are ready to acknowledge that without him they can do nothing; they will not brag of their services as the proud Pharaſee, God I thank thee, I am not as other men, &c.

5thly, They have all a great regard for his authority, and will obey God rather than man, as the apostles of Christ, Daniel, and the three children, &c. Every one of them is ready to say, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Give strength to obey, and command what thou wilt.

6thly, They are all for the standing of their master's house, and stand up for their master's honour. It goes nearer the hearts of his faithful servants to see him injured, or his Crown profaned, than any private interest of their own: it grieves them to see their master's house invaded by thieves, and robbers, and they will not take them by the hand, but bear faithful testimony against them. They cannot part with the least hoof that pertains to their great master.

7thly, All God's faithful servants have his seal set upon them, as you see in the text, Hurt not the earth nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. O say you, how shall I know if I be among the sealed?

Ans. You may know it by the print of the seal. You know the print of the seal upon the wax is an exact transcript of the graving that is on the seal; just so is it here, when Christ seals, or sets his mark upon the soul, he just by the power of his Spirit puts the print of his own grace upon it, John i. 16. Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

i. e. the Grace that is in the believer, just corresponds unto the grace that is in Christ : As in nature so it is in grace, the child receives from the parent by natural Generation, member for member, eye for eye, Hands, legs, limbs, just like its parents that begat it ; so it is in supernatural things, or in regeneration, we receive from him who of his own will begat us by the word of truth, grace for grace. The Spirit shews the things of Christ unto us, and we by beholding thereof, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

So then, see whether you have the following prints of Christ's seal upon you. 1st, The print of his life ; Because I live, ye shall live also. It is the life of Christ that is in the soul of the believer. I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God. Where notice the believer does not live upon his own feelings, or grace in him, but on Christ the fountain of life. 2d, The print of his light, for he enlightens every man that comes into the world. So then, have you in his light seen light ? if so, then you will know the difference between light and darkness, day and night, and when it is night you will long to see the sun again, and go mourning without the sun. 3dly, A print of his love, for God is love, and he draws with the Cords of love, he kindles a fire of love in the heart, the sparks of which are always flying upward toward heaven. 4thly, A print of his holiness ; Be ye holy as I am holy ; And this is it that makes the soul to groan under a body of sin and death, to war against it, and so long to be fully like him in holiness. 5thly A print of his faithfulness made on the soul of the word of truth. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth. What is faith, but just the impression of God's faithfulness made on the soul by the word of truth ; insomuch, that whenever the soul hears the record of God concerning Christ, it cries, O this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance.



6thly, The soul gets a print of his seal for the honour and Glory of God, so that the man cannot but stand up for the house of God, and the concerns of his glory. The Zeal of thine house hath eaten me up says Christ, and therefore like him, the man that is sealed, he cannot endure to see the house of God turned into a den of thieves, robbers, and hirelings buyers, and sellers, and he is far from joining hand with them. 7thly, The man that carries the print of Christ's seal upon his forehead in a way of a visible profession of Christ and his cause. and truth, in opposition to the corruption of a wicked world. Hence it is, that as the world hated Christ, so it hated them also, for as the world knows its own so it soon knows the followers of Christ, that keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus. And this is one thing among others, that gives me a very bad notion of these new conversions so much talked of, that if they know a man to be either a formal or practical acceder, they will not enter upon a religious conversation with him, or give any account of the Lord's way of dealing with them, contrary to the command, be ready to render to every man a reason or the hope that is in you.

Use 3d. Of consolation unto those that are sealed, for we are commanded to speak comfort to you, and therefore know for your comfort, 1st that Christ the angel of God's presence has the charge of you. All they saints are in his hand, he hath power over all flesh to give you eternal life. 2dly, he is ascending from the east like the sun in the firmament, even when the clouds are thickest and darkest, it does not hinder his arising, and he will break through to the salvation and comfort of all his sealed ones, that keep the commandments of God, and have, and contend for the faith delivered to the saints. His goings forth are prepared as the morning. 3dly, He is a person of great power and authority, for he hath the seal of

the living God, he hath the keys of the house of David, he opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens, yea the keys of hell and death belong unto him. 4thly, All the executioners of the divine wrath against a wicked world are under his command you see here that the angels that loose the winds, they are at his beck, and fulfil his will and pleasure. Good angels are his ministering spirits, and they minister for Good to them that are the heirs of salvation, and the bad angels are in his chains which he lengthens out or shortens at his pleasure. 5thly, It is his opportunity to help his church, and to interpose when the danger is most threatening, for here he gives the cry, when the winds are at the point of being loosed. 6thly, All his administrations are inculcate for your good, Rom. viii. 28. He rides in heaven for your help. 7thly, He will guide you with his counsel, and bring to glory.

Use 4th. Of error, to all unbelieving Christless world, who instead of being the servants of God, are serving divers lusts and pleasures, who instead of having the seal of heaven, have the seal of hell upon them. All carnal unstable professors who are already swandering with the winds, giving up with the truth and the tradition we have received from the Lord in this land. what shall I say to you, your condemnation is awful and terrible, God's soul hath no pleasure in you. Perhaps indeed you may imagine otherwise, and that in giving up with the covenanted cause of Christ in this land, you have now fallen upon a new way which God approves of, and your own soul delights in; but read these three scriptures, Isa. xlv. 20. He feedeth of ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Isa. l. 11. Behold all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk ye in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This

shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow, Isa. lxvi. 3, 4. He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man, he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck, he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood, he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol, yea they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will chuse their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them : because, when I called none did answer, when I spake they did not hear ; but they did evil before mine eyes, and choose that in which I delighted not. The winds when loosed to the full, whither will they drive you ? Especially you that have had the knowledge of the truth, made a profession of it before the world, and yet have turned away from the testimony, of Christ in this land, you may see and read your doom if infinit mercy do not prevent, Heb. 6. 5, 6. Heb. 10, 27, 28. 2 Pet. 3. at the close, &c. Perhaps you may think this very hard, but it is no harder than God has made it for whom it is impossible to lie.

Use 4th. Shall be of exhortation unto all in general even to all that are afar off to come to Christ before the wind be fully loosed, that perhaps shall blow you out of this world into an unalterable state of wo and misery . O come to Christ, I say in order to your being sealed with his seal, for he is the angel which hath the seal of the living God. His Father commands you to come to him, 1 John 3. 23 He himself invites you to come yea not only invites you, but importunately solicites you to come, Isa. 55 1, 2, 3. Ho every one that thirsteth come to the waters, he that hath no money let him come, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price, &c. He passes his word that he will make you welcome, and that you shall not be put away, com to me who will, I will in no wise cast out He sae putting away, he complains of your backwardness to come,



John 5. 29. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life. His Father sealed him, and he hath the seal of the living God, that he may seal all that come to him in a way of believing, John 6. 27. He makes it an argument to press sinners to come to him for life and salvation, because him hath God the Father sealed. If ye be sealed by him, you are the preserved in Christ Jesus, the winds shall never hurt you, no evil shall come near your dwelling, Christ himself shall be your hiding place from the storm. The curse of the law, the storm of vindictive wrath, the sting of death, the malice of Satan, the rage of men, and devils shall never hurt you, he shall cover you with his feathers, &c. If you be sealed by him, you shall be guided by his counsel he will lead you in the way you know not, until he bring you to his glory. If you do not come to him to get his seal, the wrath of God abiderth on you, and will pursue you through all the ages of eternity. He that believeth not is condemned already, and the day comes, when it shall be said to you depart from me, I never knew you, for you have not my seal on your hearts or foreheads.

Don't say I am a sinner, and therefore he will not receive me, for it is only sinners he deals with. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Don't say I am a great and grievous sinner, he will not put his seal upon me, for he says to the greatest of sinners, I am mighty to save Isa. 1. 18. Remember Paul, Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, for they all obtained mercy, and are triumphing in heaven.

Don't say I have nothing to recommend me to him, for he wants nothing but poverty, misery, blindness, &c.

Don't say I fear the door is shut, for he says John 10. 9. I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, &c.

Don't say I am not elected, and do not belong to

his commission, for neither you nor all the devils in hell can say you do not belong to the election of grace come to him by faith, an get his seal, and then you may read your name in the Lambs book of life.

Don't say his bowels are shut up against me, I have often his call so often, for he says Jer. 3. 1, 10. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord, Return ye back-sliding children, &c.

Don't say I want power, for he gives power to the faint, and increases strength to them that have no might.

Don't say he is angry with me, for that moment you come to him, his anger turneth away, and he says to the soul that comes, Thou art my dear son, my pleasant child, like the father of the prodigal, Luke 15. It is the delight of his soul, to see a prodigal coming home to him.

Direct. 1st. Be convinced that by nature you have the seal of hell upon you, and that you belong to the devil; study to know and be convinced that God is angry with you every day, that you are condemn'd already, dead in sins, upon the very borders of eternal wo and misery. 2d. Be convinced and persuaded that Christ is a Saviour, and a great one mighty to save, Psalm 89. 19. Isa. 63. 1. 3d. Be persuaded that you have a title to him, to employ him as your Saviour, a right by his wearing the human nature, a right to him by office. A Saviour is for a lost sinner, a mediator to make peace, a redeemer to set captives at liberty, a prophet to teach the ignorant, a priest ordained for men. A right by the command of God, by his own invitation, and the free grant and gift of him to sinners in the gospel. 4th. In the persuasion of all this, cast thy perishing soul in his arms, ly down at his door, and say, if I perish I shall perish here, where never on perished. 5th. in a dependance on the divine power, and in obedience

to the devine command, John 3. 23. mint at believ-  
ing, and be be perswaded upon his own faithful pro-  
mise, that through his grace ye shall be saved as well  
as others.

Use 5th. Shall be in a word to God's sealed ones,  
that have come to him in a way of believing. And  
all I shall say to you, shall be in a few advices, in  
order to your being est-blished, and being preserved  
from any hurt or danger by the pernicious winds  
that blow in our day.

1st, Then, as you have come to Christ the angel  
that hath the seal of the living God, so study to be  
always renewing your acts of faith upon him that he  
may renew and brighten his own seal upon your souls  
1 Pet. 25. To whom coming as to a living stone ye  
are built up, &c. Let the life ye live be by faith on he  
Son of God, for by faith ye stand. He that trusteth  
in the Lord shall be as mount Zion that cannot be  
removed for ever.

2dly Cry that the wind of heaven may awake,  
and blow away the hurtful winds of hell. Can. 4.  
verse last, Awake O north wind, come thou south,  
blow upon my garden. Ezek. 37. Come from the  
four winds O breath, and breathe upon those slain,  
that they may live. And then the dead and dry  
bones will stand up as a numerous army to fight the  
battles of the Lord. And learn to distinguish the  
winds that come from another airth. And particu-  
larly remember that every wind however specious  
that blows against the present truth or testimony is a  
hurtful wind. A testimony is lifted up for the cove-  
nantied Doctrine, Discipline, worship and govern-  
ment of the church of Christ which the greatest ene-  
mies are not able to disapprove, being so evidently  
founded on the word of God. Now every wind that  
blows against the truth, tho' it appear like a heav-  
enly wind, yet it must be rejected as coming from a  
bad airth. Isa. 8. at the close, To the law and testi-



mony if they speak not accordnig to these things, it is because there is no truth in them.

3dly, In order to your being preserved from all hurtful winds, hide the word of God in your heart, Psalm. 119. 11. They word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against thee. It is said of the righteous man, the law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide. And therefore take heed to the sure word of prophesy as to a light shining in a dark place, for by it you shall be thoroughly furnished unto every good work, and secured against the wind of error, delusion, temptation, prophanity or apostacy from the truth.

4thly Hold fast what you have received that no man take your crown. Have you receiv'd Christ Jesus the Lord, and been determined to embrace him who is the unspeakable gift of God; hold fast the grip you have gotten of him, as the spouse d'd. I held him and would not let him go. Have you received any of his love tokens on this occasion, lay them up, and hold them fast, for Satan will do his best to spoil and rob you of them. Have you received the testimony of Jesus, and made a profession of your faith, then hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, stedfast unto the end. Be unmoveable in your profession, particularly in your profession of the present truth against which the main bensil of the present winds are levelled. If a thief or a robber enter a house, and be carrying away any part of your furniture or Goods, your present care is to recover that part of your furniture which is in the greatest hazard of being lost. God hath given Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers, even he against whom we sinned. The house of God is in danger of being quite plundered, and spoiled, much of its valuable furniture is carried off, study then to recover what is lost, and hold fast what remains of the cove-

anted doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Christ in this land.

5thly, keep a strict and watchful eye upon all the enemies of Christ, and of your own salvation. You have enemies both within, and without doors. Take heed in the first place, of an evil heart of unbelief, that it do not turn you away from the living God, you cast yourselves out of his protection, and then you are an easy prey to all your other enemies, and are fair to be driven away like chaff before the wind. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Be not ignorant of Satan's devices, and wiles, who casts himself into every shape in order to catch the prey, and who at this day is transforming himself into an angel of light, by counterfeit convictions, conversions, and raptures of joy; which (tis well known through the land) leave men and women just where they were, if not worse because imagining themselves to be in a state of grace they are proof against all that can be said to the contrary, until God come and sweep away the refuge of lies.

6thly, Take care what ministers you own and hear as the ambassadors of Christ, this is as necessary a caveat in our day, as it was in the days of the apostles, 1 John 4. 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets have gone abroad into the world. And if you ask how shall we try them, Christ answers the question, Matth. 23. 20. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves, you shall know them by their fruits. But say you what are their fruits by which they may be known? Answer. Do you see any of them fishing up and down for worldly gain, do you see them strengthening the hands of those that are pulling down the ~~good~~ work of reformation, and weakening the

hands of those that are minting to build it up! Do you see them tormented by a testimony for the Lord's work in the land, and siding with these that are carrying on a course of backsliding? Do you see them entering any other way than by the door of the house; depend upon it they are not the true prophets of Christ, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, and therefore don't own them as the ambassadors of Christ; they don't carry Christ's commission, and therefore though they shall say, Lo here is Christ, or lo he is there, whatever pretensions they may make to the Spirit of Christ, yet go not after them, because these fruits are not the fruits of the faithful prophets of Christ's sending, and if he never sent them, they cannot profit their hearers, however perhaps they may have the art of touching the imagination, or raising passions unto strange and unaccountable effects.

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